



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
 National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory
 Research Triangle Park, NC 27711

OFFICE OF
 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

November 20, 2015

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Intent to Vacate Large Lakes Research Station Located in Grosse Ile, Michigan

FROM: William H. Benson, Acting Director *William H. Benson*
 National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory

THRU: Christopher S. Robbins, Acting Associate Assistant Administrator *Chris Robbins*
 Office of Research and Development

TO: Vaughn Noga, Director
 Office of Administration

The purpose of this memorandum is to communicate the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory plans to vacate EPA's Large Lakes Research Station (LLRS) facility located in Grosse Ile, Michigan on or about December 31, 2016. This decision is based primarily on three factors: mission requirements, reduced staffing levels, and operating costs.

The LLRS research mission has evolved over the past 45 years from bench laboratory work supporting mercury and trace metal projects to sophisticated computer modeling and forecasting. The bench laboratory work ceased in 2010 with the sun-setting of the mercury and trace metal analyses. With the current bench laboratory work operations no longer necessary at Grosse Ile, the Environmental Due Diligence Process (EDDP) Phase I investigation has begun with the OARM/OA contractor. The document investigation, site visit, and staff interviews have occurred and the report is currently being drafted and complete by the January 2016. We anticipate that Phase II and III of the EDDP will begin in early spring of 2016 and be completed by a target date of January of 2017. Final costs associated with EDDP Phases II and III are unknown at this time. We have attached a copy of the EDDP timeline assumptions for your reference.

Additionally, of our four remaining ORD Federal research staff, two plan to retire at the end of 2016, leaving only two ORD federal staff on hand. One of the individuals planning to retire is the station (and branch) chief, whose responsibilities include facility management. The remaining two fulltime scientific staff will work remotely and not need to use the facility. Therefore, no ORD employees will be managing or inhabiting the building. Currently, ORD pays for the annual costs to operate and maintain Grosse Ile. Based on resources identified as part of the EPA Lab Study cost data categories, we estimate non-research average annual S&T support costs of \$225K annually to maintain the facility (including basic infrastructure, repair and improvements, safety and health management).

ORD does not plan to maintain the Grosse Ile station past December 2016 when we expect the Environmental Due Diligence Process (EDDP) work to be complete. If EPA determines it is advantageous to keep the station for other purposes, the remaining FY17 S&T non-research funds would be available to the end of FY17. However, a facility manager will be required, along with a source of funds appropriate to the purpose of the remaining activities performed at the facility which will require a discussion with OCFO.

If the Agency decides to close the facility, your assistance is requested for determining closure requirements, notifying the non-ORD occupants (EPA and non-EPA), and final disposition of the station. For additional discussion of the EDDP effort, please contact Dave Shoffner, NHEERL's facility coordinator, (Shoffner.David@epa.gov; 919-541-0894), Russ Kreis, Branch Chief in Grosse Ile, (Kreis.Russell@epa.gov; 734-692-7615) or Dale Hoff, Mid-Continent Ecology Division Acting Director (Hoff.Dale@epa.gov; 218-529-5011) to discuss the processes and make plans for achieving this goal.

Attachment

cc: Donna Vizian, OARM
Bill Ridge, OARM
Lek Kadeli, ORD
Amy Battaglia, ORD
Bill Russo, ORD
Dale Hoff ORD